RESTORATION REVIEW

Leroy Garrett, Editor

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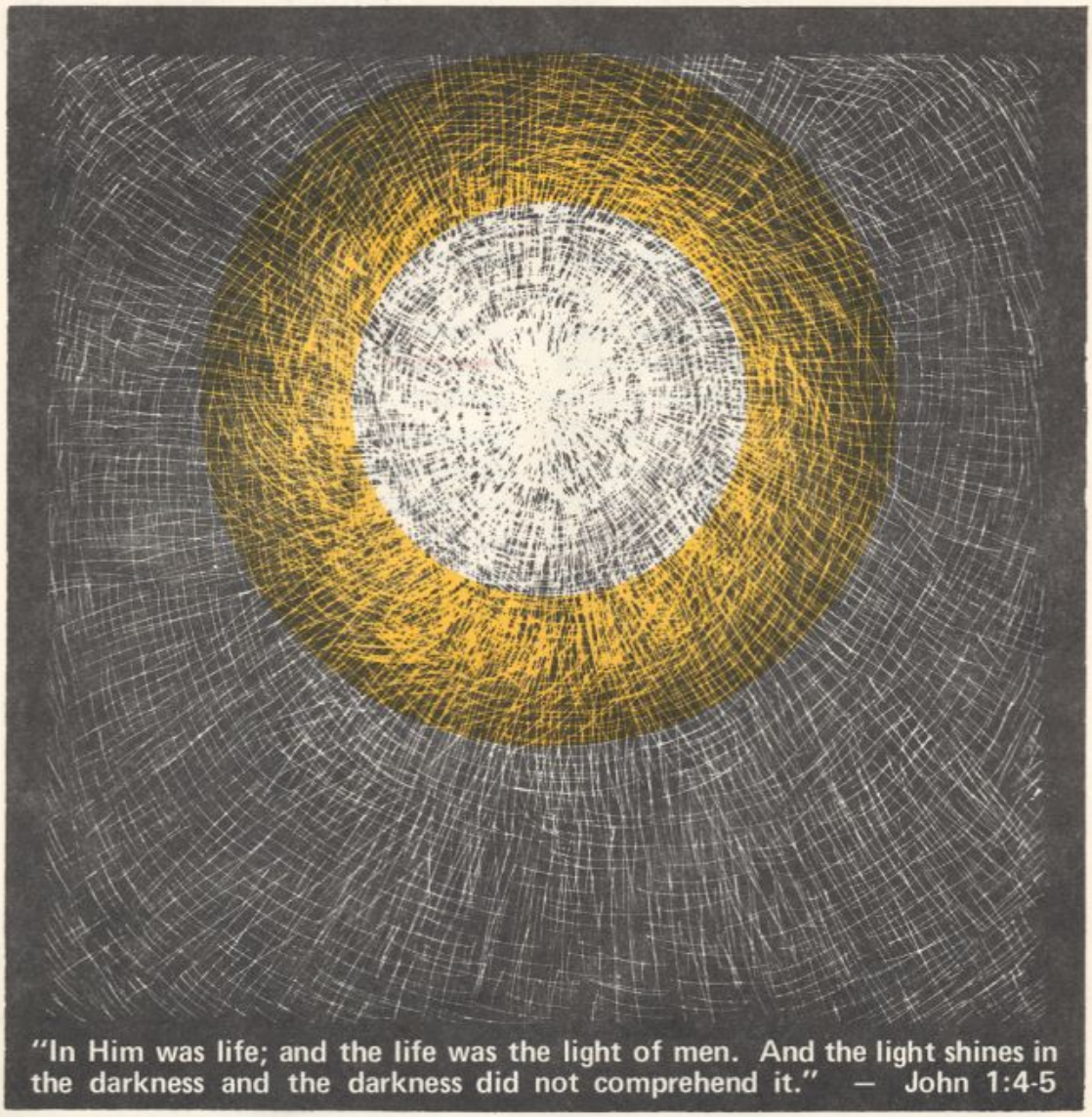

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it." — John 1:4-5

Volume 16, No. 10 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **December 1974**

The Church of Christ: Yesterday and Today. . .

THE ONE HOPE OF THE CHURCH

Hope springs eternal in the human breast.- Alexander Pope

Life becomes most tragic when that spring of hope that the poet refers to runs dry. In his despair Job cried out “Swifter than a weaver’s shuttle my days have passed, leaving no hope behind” (Job 7:6), which shows that hope does not quite always spring eternal in the human breast. “The mighty hopes that make us men” that Tennyson writes of do in fact sometimes pass us by, leaving us something less than men.

There is that hope that even the best of worldly men know little about, something far different from what poets usually write about. The apostle referred to it as “the hope stored up in heaven for you” (Col. 1:4) or simply as “the hope to which you are called” (Eph. 4:4). Those that have that one hope need not grieve, Paul says, like those of the world *who have no hope* (1 Thess. 4:13), and it is with grievous pen that he writes of those who are “without hope and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). Can anything be more pitiable than that person who has no hope that reaches beyond the fragile security of this world?

Robert Owen, the socialist, was apparently such a man. He came to this country to build the ideal socialist community, supposing that whatever this world has to offer can best be attained in communistic living. Being an atheist, he insisted that religion is a hindrance to human progress in that its concerns lie in “a pie in the sky by and by” to the neglect of making this world better. He challenged the clergy to defend its cause in public debate, little realizing that Alexander Campbell would be accepting it, a man hardly typical of the clergy that turned off the likes of Robert Owen.

Before their debate, Mr. Owen was a guest of Campbell at Bethany, and he was much impressed with the magnanimity of his host and especially with the beauty of the western Virginia hills, assuring Campbell that people of good taste in his native England would travel miles to see his lovely landscapes. One day as they walked those hills together they came upon the family cemetery. “There is one advantage I have over the Christian,” Mr. Owen said, turning to his host, “I am not afraid to die.” The atheist went on to assure Campbell that if he had a few business matters attended to, he would be quite ready to die. To which Mr. Campbell replied, “Well, you say you have no *fear* in death; have you any *hope* in death?”

After a solemn pause Mr. Owen conceded that he had no hope in death. “Then,” rejoined Campbell, pointing to an ox standing near, “you are on the level with that brute. He has fed till he is satisfied, and stands in the shade whisking off the flies, and has neither

hope nor fear in death." At this Mr. Owen smiled with some confusion, and was unable to deny the appropriateness of Campbell's illustration.

It is tragic enough for those of the world to be without hope, but for the redeemed themselves, the very ones called into the one hope, to live the barren life of a beast who has neither fear nor hope in death is unthinkable. Generally speaking, the modern church does not reflect that "sure hope" that 1 Pet. 1:3 refers to, sometimes translated "living hope." The apostle goes on to write of "the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens." He adds, *this is a cause of great joy for you.* If disciples had that *sure hope* and *great joy,* the likes of Robert Owen could not talk about Christians being afraid to die.

Hope is like a ministering angel to the believer, for it does so much for him. It purifies his soul: "Everyone who has this hope in God, purifies himself as he is pure" (l Jn. 3:3). *This* hope refers to what he has just said: that the believer as God's child will someday see Jesus and become like him. Such a promise should motivate us to live after the example of our Lord, thus living *pure* lives. A living hope and a pure life are inseperable. A man who *really* believes that he will be with Jesus in heaven and share in his glory does not have to be persuaded to pay his debts or be true to his wife.

Hope is not deceptive: "These sufferings bring patience, as we know, and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us" (Rom. 5:4-5). Beautiful, isn't it? In a world that is so deceptive and disappointing there is one thing that is sure, *hope*. Friends and family may disappoint us and the economy may trick us, but never the promises of God. Hope will surely do its thing with us as it did with Abraham: "Though it seemed Abraham's hope could not be fulfilled, he hoped and he believed, and through doing so he did become the father of many nations exactly as he had been promised" (Rom. 4:18).

It gives us that full assurance: "And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness in realizing the full assurance of hope until the end" (Heb. 6:11). It goes on to say, *so that you may not be sluggish.* What a lesson this is! We browbeat people with threats of hell fire and brimstone, while we had better give them that confidence and assurance that a lively hope provides. It is this that will arouse them from their sluggishness, not our bruising tactics. Hope edifies and encourages. So says Heb. 11:1: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Here hope is tied to faith, as it often is in scripture, as it is with love.

It is tied to love and faith in 1 Cor. 13:13: "So faith, hope, love a bide, these three; but the greatest of these is love," and verse 7 tells us that "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." In Col. 1:4-5 hope is again linked to both love and faith: "We have heard of your *faith* in Christ Jesus and of the *love* which you have for

all the saints, because of the *hope* laid up for you in heaven." If one's hope runs dry, his love and faith will surely be in disarray.

Hope is in fact closely tied to all that is basically Christian. Col. 1:27 points to "Christ in you, the hope of glory," while 1 Tim. 1:1 speaks of Jesus as "our hope." Jesus is our hope, how great that is! That is the long and short of it: *as we have Jesus* so *we have hope.* Unless a real Jesus is in our heart there will not be a living hope in our soul. And so Col. 1:23 refers to "the hope of the gospel," which shows that what God has done for us in the Christ is the basis of all our hope. If a believer comes up with more law in his mind than gospel, he is almost certain to be one of little hope.

Hope infuses the whole of the spiritual life. We are to *rejoice* in hope (Rom. 12:12), *abound* in hope (Rom. 15:13) and *be patient* in hope (1 Thess. 1:3). The disciple's gear includes "the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. 5:8), and he is sustained by the "hope of eternal life" (Tit. 1:2). Tit. 2:13 identifies "our blessed hope" as "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." This is one of the few places where Jesus is actually called God.

This is the one hope and the only hope for the believer. It is the hope anticipated in the Old Covenant scriptures: "Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope." This is what Paul was talking about when he stood before Agrippa: "I stand here on trial for hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day" (Acts 23:6-7). And to the Jews in Rome he said as only Paul could say: "It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain" (Acts 28:20).

We should praise God for all that He has done through the apostles and prophets in making good on "the hope of Israel" in giving us Jesus. Praise him like David did as he sang with hope: "I will hope continually, and will praise thee yet more and more" (Ps. 71:14).

In a very beautiful way the church's one hope is linked to the church's one Spirit. The apostle assures us that "we are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18). Paul is showing that becoming like Jesus is a continuing thing, not only while we are in this world, but in the world to come as well. "We shall be like him, even as he is," is the promise of 1 Jn. 3:2, and Philip. 3:20-21 says that "we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body." Jesus now has a body, a spiritual, resurrected (not a resuscitated) body, and in the resurrection we shall have the same.

This means that our bodies have been purchased by God (1 Cor.6:20), but they have not yet been redeemed, and so Paul says, "We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bod-

ies" (Rom. 8:23). As an assurance or guarantee that this will really come true, God makes our present bodies "a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor.6:19), and seals us with "the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13-14).

The "possession" that we are to acquire is a resurrected body like Jesus'. God will finally redeem our bodies that He has thus far only purchased. The visitation of the Guest of heaven is a guarantee that the redemption will indeed come, and that we shall be joint heirs with the Christ in the fullest sense. This is the import of Eph. 4:30, which shows how the Spirit and the one hope are related: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

This is the one hope to which the church is called. Once the church takes that call seriously, we can believe that a hopeless world will take us more seriously.—*the Editor*

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A MASSIVE WALKOUT IN DALLAS

It isn't unusual for some brother or a family of believers, or even two or three families, to leave a congregation, and go elsewhere in search of more freedom in Christ, but it is most impressive when over 200 souls, representing half or more of the congregation, do so. Such was the case when 68 families walked out of the Wynnewood Hills Church of Christ in Dallas in order to become a free people in a new congregation. For several weeks, in late summer, they met in temporary quarters, but they finally merged with an old Oak Cliff group known as the Hampton Place Church of Christ. Interestingly enough, I was the preacher at Hampton Place when I married back in 1944, while also teaching at a junior high school.

Hampton Place had dwindled in size because of various difficulties in recent years, leaving only a handful meeting in a building that will accommodate 300 or so. In a stroke of good sense that is all too rare for our folk a congregation without a building and a building without a congregation got together, and they now wear the name Southwest Church of Christ.

It is a red 'hot news item whenever half of a large Church of Christ gets up and walks out in protest, and we are sure that our readers are interested in what happened and why. For this to have happened in Dallas is especially significant, for Dallas has long been a bastion of bedrock Church of Christism. You can be sure that the old conservative leadership of our Dallas churches is taking a long look at this one, and with some uneasiness. It can happen (perhaps again and again) in Dallas too! All over the country I've heard brethren acquainted with the situation in Dallas say that Dallas needs "a *free*

Church of Christ," to which I'd reply, "It will happen one day." Well, from what I hear from Southwest brethren in "Big D," freedom in Christ is what this is all about.

As for the facts of the case, it is the same story that is being told all across the land by those who have tired of oppression and obscurantism. The cry, "Let my people go!" comes to mean *Let us think! Let us explore! Let us grow and glow'* And when all the *isms* of Church of Christ tradition bar the way and they can neither think, explore, grow or glow, then they go. An exodus can be a glorious thing to folk who have been held down and fenced up by partyism, and there is no indication that our partyism is any better than the next church's.

This Dallas walkout was hardly a few disgruntled souls that were frustrated because they couldn't run the show. They *were* the show, for the most part. It included both of the preachers and three of the elders, eight of the deacons (out of 14), and 21 of the church's 30 teachers! There were 150 *bona fide* members in all, and over 200 counting the children, that formed the exodus. The report of the remaining elders of Wynnewood Hills to the other Dallas churches that "several families left" was therefore a gross understatement.

The Wynnewood Hills story is remarkably similar to what happened to about half the congregation in Caruthersville, Mo., recounted in these pages some months ago. The strategy there was to disband the congregation, rendering everyone memberless for the moment, and then reorganize it by having all members subscribe to "a statement of faith" by stepping forward. This left 80 or 90 people standing at their seats with nowhere to go. Today they are a happy, vibrant Church of Christ in another part of the city. The device employed at Caruthersville is something I'd see Gen. George Patton using had he been an elder among us rather than an army commander.

The ploy used by the Wynnewood Hills elders was similar. Drawing up a statement of faith, they read it to the congregation and ruled that every elder, deacon, teacher and staff member would have to subscribe completely with the items therein or else take no active role in the church's program. It so happened, as it often does, that the dissenters had no particular objections to the items set forth, but they didn't like the idea of having to subscribe to what they considered a creed. In a statement to the other Dallas churches, the new Southwest group explained that this "creed" was the principal reason for the exodus. But this was not resorted to until every effort was made to dissuade the remaining elders from their creedal demands. One of the elders who left pled with his fellow shepherds not to impose a creedal statement upon the church, for it was deliverance from just such tyranny that brought our people into existence. An elder at Caruthersville, one who had led the flock for many years, made a similar plea when the church there was invited to step forward in the name of some man's creed. Too bad we don't have such speeches on tape, for they surely represent some of the greatest moments in our glorious history. Someday, when I am cavorting with the angels, I may ask one of them if I can't listen to those pleas

for freedom given by those elders in Dallas and Caruthersville. Better still, I just might ask the elders themselves to run them by again! And to hear Luther's "Here I stand" speech and Campbell's "Sermon on the Law" would be something, wouldn't it?

The Wynnewood Hills elders have charged the new group with "false doctrine," namely: believing in the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, tongue speaking, Christians in all denominations, and in signs, miracles and special gifts. The truth is that the dissenters are not what we call "charismatic," but they are freer and more tolerant on the subject than usual, and they are exploring the resources of power available to the believer in the Holy Spirit.

The charge of believing there are Christians among the denominations is a most interesting one. That means that our most renowned leaders in the Church of Christ, including Alexander Campbell and David Lipscomb couldn't teach a class at Wynnewood Hills! The Campbells and the Stones launched our Movement. "to unite the Christians in all the sects." What did that wise man say about those who ignore history having to repeat its mistakes? What has happened to us when we drive half the congregation away for not believing that we're the only Christians? Fruits of long years of Church of Christ legalism in Dallas, that's what it is.

It is in little ways that people reveal their love of freedom. A young sister at Wynnewood Hills expressed her hunger for more spiritual experiences. One of these concerned elders advised that she might visit a nearby Baptist church, which has been causing a lot of excitement with its dynamic services. That shepherd just happened to be more concerned for that little lamb's spiritual growth than he was to keep her tied to a Church of Christ mentality. It was that kind of thing that started it all at Wynnewood Hills. When you start thinking and questioning, when you put Jesus before the party, when you teach the Bible without Church of Christ glasses, when you really become free as the Lord's man and not some sect's man, you are different in most every way. So that's the long and short of the story from south Oak Cliff: a bunch of our brothers and sisters tasted the liberty that is in Christ Jesus, and for no party's sake were they willing to be bound again to a yoke of bondage. The very idea, an elder in the Church of Christ suggesting that one of his flock might visit a Baptist church! But things like that happen when folk are free to be themselves and think in terms of *persons* rather than party. Too bad there wasn't a Church of Christ with some spiritual vitality that he could have recommended to the sister. Now maybe there'll be one.

A side note to this story is that the Baptist church referred to above has also been "disfellowshipped" by its sister churches. That is not quite accurate, for the Baptist churches, being more autonomous than we are, haven't that kind of power over each other. But the church was asked by the local Baptist association to voluntarily withdraw. Why? Same old story, freedom. The Baptists don't like for their folk to be different either. What

was it that old Georg Friedrich Hegel said about the story of human history being the story of man's struggle to be free. Take our own history, the theme is the same. Praise the Lord! —*the Editor*

Each and everyone of us has one obligation, during the bewildered days of our pilgrimage here: the saving of his own soul, and secondarily and incidentally thereby affecting for good such other souls as come under our influence.—*Kathleen Norris*

When men do anything for God, the very least thing, they never know where it will end, nor what amount of work it will do for Him. Love's secret, therefore, is to be always doing things for God, and not to mind because they are such very little ones.—*Frederick William Faber*

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What Does "The Will of God" Mean? . . .

SOMEONE POISONED THE CANDY

It was such a tragic story coming out of Pasadena, Texas. A little boy sampled some of the candy out of his Halloween trick-or-treat bag, and went into convulsions almost immediately. He died at the hospital shortly afterwards. The neighbors in the upper-class suburb were shocked that such a thing could happen on their street. Police waited for the father, who had accompanied his son and other children on their fun night, to regain his composure so that he could retrace the route they had taken and thus begin the search for the unconscionable soul who would drop poisoned candy into a child's bag.

The following day the news from Pasadena was even more shocking. The child's own father was in jail, charged with the murder of his own son. The man's friends were stunned in disbelief. His neighbors could not conceive of such horror. His associates at the near-by Baptist Church where he was a member, including the pastor, insisted that they could not believe it until they heard it from his own lips. But the authorities were sure of their evidence, that the man had murdered his own flesh and blood for the sake of insurance money.

Facts like these cause us to marvel at the mystery of evil, and it chastens us in regard to the nature of man. Have you ever wondered if you yourself might be capable of such gross cruelty, or if our own nation could sink to the degradation of Nazi Germany? Not only does the apostle speak of "lying wonders," but of those who wander so far from God as to be "without sense, without honour, without natural affection, without pity" (Rom. 1:31).

What kind of a creature does man become when he is senseless, pityless, and has no affection for his own offspring? We cringe at even claiming kin to such a one, and we can't allow ourselves to accept the fact that even some men are like that. To say that such a one is sick doesn't help much, for all the camouflages of psychology cannot hide the ugly truth of man's capacity for gross evil.

One unacceptable interpretation coming out of such tragedies is that *It* is *the will of God.* We hear this around every corner, however dark human existence becomes. A young mother is struck down by cancer, leaving several children who need her so badly. A man loses both hands in an accident shortly after graduating from dental school, left bewildered because he cannot repay his aged parents who made such sacrifices to put him through school. A wife has to hear the bitter news that her husband has been killed in company with another woman, leaving her wracked as much by his infidelity as by his death. An athlete is paralyzed for life in one fatal moment on the field, and all his hopes and dreams are gone forever while still just a boy.

How can anyone believe that any of this, with all the compounded evils that life has to dispense, is the will of God. How can anyone lay a hand on the shoulder of that lonely woman in Pasadena, whose son is dead and whose husband is in jail for murdering him, and say to her, *God has willed it* Not only is it senseless, it is brutal. We can say that our heavenly Father cares and understands, and that He suffers with her. But not that it is His will.

Someone poisoned the candy! It is so descriptive of much of human experience. Multitudes starve because they were born in the wrong place. Vicious rumors destroy good reputations. Deception violates sacred trusts. Even innocent neglect sometimes allows a fatal disease to take its toll. A single misadventure can wipe away a fortune. Many businesses fail that *almost* made it. Many a person failed who really deserved to make it. Many have to cope with life who are naturally too ill-equipped for the ordeal. They hunger even while sitting at the banquet of life.

Since we are to be light in this kind of a world, we must seek to relate *the will of God* to the human predicament. What do we as the earth's salt have to say about God's will to all those who are battered by inexplicable tragedy?

A generation ago Leslie Weatherhead wrote a little book on *The Will of God,* which deals beautifully with the problem I have raised. He writes from the heart to those who are distressed and perplexed, and who are asking *How could God ever allow such a thing to happen?* There is entirely too much thinking about the will of God, he says, which can leave one with a fatalistic view of life. Rather than to use "the will of God" indiscriminately, which is so often the case. Mr. Weatherhead suggests a threefold distinction: the *intentional* will of God, the *circumstantial* will of God, and the *ultimate* will of God.

He illustrates this distinction by pointing to the Cross, which he cannot see as God's *intentional* will. God intended that men should follow Jesus, not murder him. The discipleship of men was His intention, not the death of His Son. This might be called His ideal purpose.

When men's evil came into conflict with God's loving purpose, the circumstance was such that the Cross was the only way out. The Cross was *now* God's will, His *circumstantial* will. In the garden Jesus seems to shrink from the Cross as something alien and evil, but he accepts it as God's will. Though nothing is more tragic than the Cross, it became the means whereby the *ultimate* will of God is realized, the salvation of lost humanity.

The lesson is dramatic, for it shows that God is able to bring good out of evil. Surely He doesn't poison anyone's candy, and it is not His intention that anyone else do so, but we can believe that somehow He will work everything for good for those who seek His will.

It is God's intentional will that your baby daughter grow to womanhood, marry and bear children, be a busy and blessed mother and grandmother, live a long and fruitful life, and then go home to the Father. But things may go wrong, whether it be your daughter's fault or not. She may become mentally or physically crippled; she may die in the bloom of youth. Or, less tragically, she may never be a wife or mother. It is hardly likely that God *ordains* spinsterhood or widowhood. But it happens in the kind of world He ordained. So, when this happens to one of his children, his circumstantial will takes over, 'find your daughter, now a spinster, is under God's will to find her fulfillment in a different direction, maybe in teaching or social work or business. In any event, if she looks to Jesus, God's ultimate will for her will be realized through all eternity.

However we express it, we must believe that God's will is always centered in love. His will is to bless, to bestow life and health and peace. Jesus says in Matt. 18:14: "It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost." All that Jesus did and said show that he considered death and disease and all human suffering as opposed to God's purposes for man.

But ours is a world in which people *are* lost and where misery *does* seem to have the upper-hand. God's will has to operate in a sinful world. He has not created us to be automatons. In giving us freewill He could not help but allow for the consequences of that freedom, which are evil as well as good. The culprit in it all is the evil will of man. This evil in man must be checked by the will of God, else the world would be swallowed up by lawlessness. So Paul writes in Col. 2:5: "Put to death, therefore, every part of you that is earthly: fornication, unchastity, passion, evil desire, and exploitation (for this is idol-worship); because of these things the Wrath of God is to come upon the disobedient."

Lam. 3:33 makes it clear that "God does not willingly grieve nor afflict the children of men," but the evil will of man makes afflictions a dire necessity. This is the eternal conflict between good and evil, and this is the reason for the Cross. Because of the danger of Paul's pride, the Lord allowed a messenger of Satan to strike him with a thorn in the flesh. God used this evil circumstance in the apostle's life to make His strength perfect through weakness. We can believe that He will act just as graciously in the life of any of us.

Man's evil does prevail, but it cannot forever. God's intentional will is often frustrated, but we believe that even here He meets His children in the frustration and "works for their good." Ultimately evil will be destroyed and the ideal in God's mind will be realized. Our part in all this will be determined by the way we respond to the kind of world we are part of. That response is to trust God's goodness and wisdom. It has to remain an unfathomable mystery as to why God created the kind of world He did and gave to man the kind of nature he has. Our part is not to "reply against God," as the apostle warns against, but to accept in child-like faith His will in our lives, believing that in whatever circumstances He has a plan for us, and that in the end His eternal purpose will be realized. That is what religion is all about.—*the Editor*

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IN RESPONSE TO THAT WOMAN ATHEIST

The following letter touches upon a subject seldom treated in this journal, but it just might be of interest. It was sent to a Dallas newspaper for its "Letters from Readers" column following the appearance of Mrs. Madeline O'Hare on an area radio station. A copy has also been sent to Mrs. O'Hare. We are making no important claims for the letter —it is surely no big deal—but it may contribute in some small way to the subject.

I was disturbed far more by the oppressive attitudes shown toward Mrs. O'Hare and to the station for featuring her than I was by her atheism. Some callers assigned her to hell, to which she responded, "Now isn't that loving and Christian!" And the station was bitterly attacked for "advertising atheism" for days afterwards. I agreed with one sweet voice of reason that said, and I bless her, "I am a Christian and do not agree with her, but I'm glad to get the atheist point of view right from an atheist. Thank you for having her on." I say *Amen!*, for if we start suppressing minority opinions, ours may be the next to be suppressed.

One can't sit in one of my philosophy classes long without being exposed to John Stuart Mill's *Essay On Liberty*, which I place right after the Bible in significance. In this piece he shows how important it is for a society, if it really wants to be free and progressive, to have open and full discussion of every controversial issue. He says if

everyone in a nation holds one view with the exception of but one man, they have no more right to suppress that one man's view than he has to suppress theirs. As a minority of one his viewpoint has as much right as theirs! If a society does not allow for free speech, it assumes itself to be infallible, he says. Further, a society might well miss some truth if it suppresses a minority position, for almost certainly it will contain *some* truth, even if it is basically wrong. Even if we should *know* a position to be completely wrong, Mills insists, still we should give it a hearing, for the truth we hold, when confronted by error, shines all the brighter and we understand it better when so tested. And in this way error tends to spend itself.

Dallas Times Herald

Dallas, Texas
To the Editor:
Mrs. Madeline O'Hare, the aggressive atheist, appeared recently on a KRLD talk show, to the apparent consternation of a number of listeners who exchanged views with her. The station is to be commended for providing this voice of dissent. The church, like every social institution, needs to be criticized; and if it has the truth, it has nothing to fear in having its faith tested through open discussion. Those of us who are theists only regret that those who confront this champion of atheism are often unequipped to deal with her shrewd tactics. This results in her getting by with saying things that just aren't true, and in making atheism look better than it really is. After listening to her for sometime, I wanted to make these points in response.

1. She is guilty of what logicians call special pleading in that she depicts the dark side of religion without presenting the other side. She points to the holy wars, the inquisition, oppression and superstition, but does not mention the enlightenment that religion has brought to the world, with all its educational, spiritual and charitable institutions. She does not tell us how many colleges, hospitals, shelter houses and leper colonies that atheism has given the world.

2. She falsely generalizes in that she describes all theists as "other directed" or "clergy dominated," as if all atheists were inner-directed and free. She sees the religionist as weak, ignorant and unconcerned for social justice, while she, "free of theism," is well-balanced, happy and busy building a better world. She never mentions the like of Albert Schweitzer, a doctor three ways, who went to Africa as a Christian response to help atone for what the white man has done to the black, or to a Martin Luther King, who was as inner-directed as one could be, in his concern for social justice. Atheism has something less than a glorious record in alleviating human misery.

3. She has every right to be an atheist, and I'll defend her liberty to state her case, but she is wrong in telling a radio audience that she has such august company as our founding fathers on her side. She named in particular our first five Presidents and Thomas Paine. This simply is not true. Norman Cousins in his In God We Trust corrects this notion that our founding fathers were atheists or agnostics. They opposed biblical literalism and clericalism, but they "most certainly did not turn against God or lose their respect for religious belief," to quote Cousins. They may have been deists (belief in one deity), but not atheists. They might not have made good Southern Baptists, but they believed in a Supreme Being. As for Paine, he even started a society in France designed to oppose atheism as a curse to the world! Hardly shades of Madeline O'Hare.

4. She misses the point of religious faith. We do not claim proof that God exists, for that would make religion a science. Religion is a love story, and we believe that God is and that He loves. But neither can she or any atheist prove that God does not exist. While humility may not be her crowning virtue, she hardly lays claim to omniscience. So there is much she does not know, and that may include the existence of God. To know that God does not exist, she would have to know everything, which would make her God since omniscience is an attribute only of God. The proposition that "God is" is an axiom that one either accepts or does not. It is not something to be proved either way. That wise old Harvard philosopher, William James, observed in his The Will to Believe that the grounds for believing in God or as good or better than not believing, so one has good reasons for believing just because he wills to and needs to. If Mrs. O'Hare wills to disbelieve, that is her business, but she ought not play dirty pool with the public.

Her insistence that churches ought to be taxed and that religion should never be imposed upon others, such as prayers in public schools, has considerable support even from within the church. So, she should count her blessings, for God is helping her more than she realizes!

Sincerely,

Leroy Garrett

(This letter was read over KRLD radio in Dallas.)

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HALF OF US ARE "OFF" ON INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

To our growing number of readers who are not members of Churches of Christ-Christian Churches I need to explain that our folk have made an issue of instrumental music in worship for over a century now. Two-thirds of our Movement (Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches) use the instrument, believing that they have the liberty in Christ to do this, while the other third (Churches of Christ) not only do not use the instrument but believe it to be wrong and make it a test of fellowship.

But that is the point of this article. Do the Churches of Christ *really* believe that the use of the instrument is a sin, or is this some kind of habit that they are keeping in good repair? And it makes for a good way to ask what we mean by *sin*, whatever be our religious background.

Guy N. Woods is a Church of Christ authority of some reputation. While I had not thought of him as a statistician, he comes up in an article in the *Christian Chronicle* with some statistics about what Church of Christ folk *really* believe about instrumental music. He says that 50% of our members do not know why we do not use instrumental music, and of that number 35% would not object to its use.

Now he is not saying that the Baptists or Roman Catholics do not understand why we do not have organs in our churches, which would be understandable enough. We ourselves, our own crowd, do not understand why we do not have the instrument, half of us that is. And a substantial percentage would not mind at all if we started moving organs and pianos into our churches. That is what brother Woods says, and I say that those are facts that should cause us to stop and think. If after a century of arguing, debating, editorializing, and disfellowshipping, our own folk are "off" on instrumental music, what kind of an issue is it, after all? Brother Woods' point is that our people should know why the instrument is a sin, and he is charging the preachers with neglect in this regard.

I do not know what kind of method brother Woods used in reaching his conclusions, but I venture to say that he would come up with vastly different percentages if he should ask such questions as: *Is it a sin to hate? Is adultery wrong?* or even *Is it a sin to exclude a man because of his race?* Or if we ask more positive questions: *Is mercy a Christian grace?, Should we love even our enemies?* or if we want to be more "doctrinal": *Is there but one Body or church in the scriptures?, Is baptism a command of God?, Is the Lord's Supper part of the Christian's worship?*

My guess is that brother Woods would get a 100% ringer from such questions—all our people would agree that adultery, hate and racism are wrong, and all would say that the church is one, that baptism is a command, and that the Lord's supper should be part of our worship.

Why then the poor response on whether it is a sin to have an organ? It is hardly because our preachers have talked more about hate and adultery than they have instrumental music.

It just may be that our members are increasingly becoming a *thinking* people, and that they want their beliefs to be no stronger than the evidence for them allows. The pioneers who got our Movement started insisted that nothing should be made a test of fellowship except that which is *clearly* set forth in the scriptures. Never mind about deductions. Never mind about necessary inferences. Never mind about examples that mayor may not apply (We all have a way of taking what we want and leaving others). Never mind about opinions. Sin and wrongdoing is to be measured only by what is clearly set forth in the Bible.

Adultery is clearly set forth as sinful. So with hate and racism. That is why *all* our people would agree to their being wrong, and if you want to make something "a test of fellowship," this would be the place to start.

The truth is—and let's be honest enough to face it—instrumental music is not clearly set forth in scripture as a sin. To argue that it is a sin because the New Covenant scriptures do not explicitly authorize it is to beg the question. Neither do they specifically authorize a lot of other things that we choose to practice, such as Sunday School, the resident pastor or minister.

I claim the right to be non-instrument, which I am, and I think my reasons are good enough to remain that way. I have several reasons, but I'll name just one, which I often refer to among instrumental Christian Churches, and that is the cause of unity. The instrument question goes far beyond our own ranks. The Quakers, the great Greek Orthodox Church, the Scot Presbyterian, to name but a few, all object to instrumental music for one reason or another. If we take the plea for unity seriously, then we had just as well think in terms of being non-instrument, especially since it usually makes for better singing anyhow (see, I gave another argument).

But all this is my opinion or deduction, drawn from what I believe the scriptures imply for Christ's church. I also happen to believe that congregations should be kept small, so as to better preserve the family-like atmosphere and so that the shepherds can know and be with each of the sheep extensively. I also object to the professional minister in the pulpit (but not to a teacher or evangelist out amongst the people!) since he interferes with the mutual sharing that I believe to be every congregation's right.

All these are my deductions from long years of study, and I believe them to be right. But, as old Thomas Campbell put it, "such deductions, when rightly inferred, may properly be called the doctrine of Christ, but they cannot be required of others except as they see the connection." I cannot therefore make such deductions, whether the instrument or the

pastor system, a test of fellowship. I cannot say that they are sins (period). They may be for me, but they become binding upon others "only as they see the connection."

This is why I distinguish between being *non-instrument* and *anti-instru*ment. I choose that our churches not have it for what I believe to be sound reasons, but I am not an *anti* in that I reject a brother, excluding him from the fellowship, because he has it.

This is what ails Guy Woods. He wants our people to be *anti-instrument,* to believe that it is a sin, and to draw the line of fellowship in reference to it. Apparently our folk are not buying it. By his own admission half of our members disagree with him—and, I presume, agree more or less with what I have just said. That means, according to brother Woods' way of labeling people, that half of us in the Church of Christ are heretics or liberals or something. But I disagree with one of brother Woods' conclusions, that a lot of our people would have no objection to the introduction of the instrument. I think that they would rather see it as "no issue" in reference to accepting those Christians who use it.

The question we have before us, which is really the nature of sin, is relevant to all believers of whatever background. The Baptists in Texas make a lot of fuss about gambling and liquor-by-the-drink. People are told that it is a sin to have a cocktail with the evening meal. The "holiness" groups make the cinema (TV?) and dancing a sin. Some see sin in everything from makeup and shorts to card playing and working on Sunday. And some *(half* the Church of Christ!) make a piano in church a sin.

There are those things that are clearly set forth in the Bible as sinful, and upon these we all agree. A brother may try to excuse his adultery or thievery, but he never tries to prove that they are not sinful. And we all admit that evil thoughts, deceit, pride, envy, exploitation, jealousy, abuse, shamelessness and senselessness are sins even when guilty of them. These are what Jesus calls sins in Mark 7:21, and he says pointedly that it is *not* what goes into a man from the outside that makes him unclean. Like a cocktail?

When I talk this way, someone always zaps me with that question, "Are you saying that something has to be specifically mentioned in scripture as a sin for it to be *a sin?"* I suppose I am saying something like that, but I would put it this way: the scriptures must *clearly teach* that something is sinful for us to say that it is a sin. For instance, it *clearly teaches* that "Whatever does not spring out of faith is a sin" (Rom. 14:23). That means that if I cannot drink a cocktail in good faith (believing that it is right for *me),* then it would be a sin. But the other fellow may be able to do so with a good conscience. (I do not, by the way, drink cocktails; but neither do I judge my brother who does.)

The scriptures clearly teach that drunkenness is a sin, but not drinking; they clearly teach that reveling is a sin, but not dancing, just as gluttony is a sin, but not eating! Indecency is a sin, but not short dresses, not necessarily. Quarreling is a sin, but a debate may not be. Lasciviousness is wrong, but kissing your boy friend or girl friend is not necessarily wrong. Profligacy is a sin, but not necessarily gambling. Some people gamble

with matches or pocket change, all for fun. My kids and I sometimes gamble on who does the dishes! Even those who go to the track and put two dollars on a nag will have to decide for themselves as to whether it is proper. I have no word from the Lord on that subject!

The Bible clearly teaches that "Sin is breaking the law" (1 Jo. 3:4). If we have no word from the Lord, a clear-cut *Thou shalt not* or a distinct implication, we'd better let it be. Let God legislate as to what is sin, not ourselves. And that is the best way to treat instrumental music in church. "If a man thinks it unclean, to him it is unclean" is the apostolic rule in Rom. 14:14. We have all too much taken it into our own hands to say what is clean or unclean for the other person. This is to go against our Lord's instruction about not judging our brother.—*the Editor*

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ON GETTING INTO BED WITH PEOPLE

The story is going around about the unusual way one Dr. Reuben has been attending his psychiatric patients in New York. They are people with communication problems, most of them unable to talk even at the level of a child. Dr. Reuben seemed to be making no progress with them. One day he came into the ward and did something most unusual, to the utter amazement of the nurses. Removing his coat, shirt, tie, and shoes, he climbed up into bed with the patients. Sharing a pillow with them, he began "Mothering" them, as he called it, a form of communication one would expect from a loving Mother. From bed to bed he did this, with the males and females alike. Nurses were aghast, inquiring of each other, "What is Dr. Reuben doing in bed with them?"

Again and again he did this, day after day. It became part of the treatment. Finally some of them began to say their first words in years, *"T-h-a-n-k y-o-u, D-o-c-t-o-r."* The stumbling words turned into sentences and continuing improvement was evident.

This incident impresses me as being beautifully Christian. Isn't this what Jesus did and is not this the mission of the church in every generation? *Getting into bed with people!*

David Wilkerson did this kind of thing in his ministry with the street gangs of New York. He not only went where they were, but he identified with them, sitting with them and sharing with them, showing them that somebody really cared. To do that kind of thing one must be willing to get his nose blooded. There he was in the midst of the blood and guts of it all, not just with the warts, but with the dope and the switchblades as well. He got into bed with them.

I saw this recently when my son Philip was immersed into Jesus at age 18. Having spent his first six years in an over-crowded orphanage in Germany, he has had some strikes against him in learning to love and to receive love. But he is winning the struggle,

especially now that he has the Spirit as his Helper. I watched that night as he was immersed. The "gang" at the youth gathering welcomed him as a new brother with big bear hugs. As I watched I thought of a lonely child in an institution seeking security by sitting on his toys rather than playing with them. Now because of Jesus he was being loved by a gang of new brothers and sisters. It warmed my heart to see them reach out and touch him with tender loving care and for him to respond so openly. They climbed into bed with him. Jesus makes. all the difference in human relations.

Some of our sisters working in the ghettoes of Brooklyn took Jesus' concern for prostitutes seriously. Waiting up for them into the wee hours, they would be there when the girls came in from off the streets to tell them that they loved them. They were there with them, these poor souls barely hanging on to a miserable existence, not to condemn but to make whole. Like Dr. Reuben, they climbed up in bed in order to communicate more intimately.

Jesus was like that as he moved amidst the human predicament. He sat next to people. He was in their homes. He washed their feet. He was in the presence of sickness, disease and death. Whether a despised publican, an unclean leper or a rejected woman, he was not too good to reach out and become a part of them, even though he was deity itself. What a beautiful and magnificent life he lived among the recreant masses of humanity. How can men miss God when they see Jesus, a sinless man climbing into bed with a sea of sinful flesh?

Maybe this is what the Lord is saying to us in that story in Lk. 14 about giving a feast. "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not invite your friends or your brothers, or the members of your family or your rich neighbors; perhaps they will invite you in turn, and so you will be repaid. No, when you give a feast, invite the poor, the disabled, the lame, the blind; then you will be happy; they cannot repay you; but you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the good."

This is probably not to be taken literally, for it would have too seldom an application. We just don't give that many dinners, and going out into the byways to invite the poor and the blind is not all that simple—nor does it really solve any problems. He is saying that we are not to relate ourselves to others in a selfish way. We are not to be polite and generous and kind for the sake of gaining something from others. Our concern is not to be so much for those who have the capacity to reward us, but for those who have no way to repay us but who need us the most.

He is teaching us to get into bed with people even when the bed is dirty. Even when the ones in bed are undesirable. He is telling us to reach out and be intimate with those who would be considered *beneath* us. To love the unlovely.

Notice that Jesus says *then you will be happy.* People who seek happiness look in the wrong places. It is not so much by *getting* or *having*, but through service to others. The happiest people that I know are of this quality. They are happy without really seeking happiness. They simply stay busy inviting the poor and the lame to the banquet of life.

This is to say that we must become more vulnerable to each other. We must be willing to take chances, to lay ourselves open to others, and dare to love and to give. This was what St. Francis did when he saw a lowly leper along the road. Dismounting from his horse, he went to the diseased man and embraced him, while at the same time despising his own life of luxury. So started the Franciscan order, dedicated to the outcasts of society. Francis made himself vulnerable by climbing into bed with an untouchable.—*The Editor*

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

Elsewhere in these columns you will read of the massive walkout in Dallas. Well, as we go to press with this number there is another walkout in this area. Some 75 of our brothers and sisters are now meeting separately right here in Denton, formerly members of the University Church of Christ, across town from our home and *not* the congregation my family attends except as occasional visitors. Same story, same issue—*freedom.* And "the control group," if I may use the psychologist's lingo, makes the same old mistakes, which only drives away those that are on the verge of leaving. Rather than threatening the disenchanted and giving them the old "obey the elders" bit, why not say something like: "We all know and love these people and believe they are really dedicated to Jesus. So if they would get up and walk away from us like this, maybe there is something wrong with us. Let's listen to what they are trying to tell us." And this business of obeying the authorities is as old as tyranny itself. In these cases, why not tell the authorities to be *shepherds.* To the "keepers of orthodoxy" who browbeat people with threats of withdrawing fellowship if they don't submit to elders, I would advise that they recall a bit of our own history. The Church of Christ is a "faction" by our own terms, for we walked off and left what we now call the Christian Church. What would we have then said to the complaint that we were factious and were not submissive to the elders? But I still say that we ought to "hang in" and *not* leave unless we just have to. I would have said the same thing back in the 1880's and 1890's, for my reading of that history convinces me that a split could have been averted. In later life Campbell said the same thing about the Disciples and the Baptists, that they should have and could have been one people. Well, what I have been

saying about these walkouts is becoming true. And they will continue if our leadership doesn't wake up and get with it. After awhile there'll be so many walkouts that it won't be news anymore!

Edward Fudge, commonly associated with "conservative" Churches of Christ and *Gospel Guardian,* is editor of a new psalter, a booklet containing 40 psalms set to music. He calls for more singing of the psalms in our assemblies. In reviewing this work, Fred Blakely, editor of *The Banner of Truth,* calls it "a delightful and valuable psalter," and gives it an extensive writeup. But he makes this complaint: "It is regrettable that Brother Fudge chose to inject into his introduction the subject of the legalistic and unwarranted ban of musical instruments in the singing, which man, not God, has imposed." He then says: "This seems to us highly ironic, for the matter of this untenable position is, of all places, glaringly incongruous in a consideration of the Psalms, which, according to the Scriptures, were originally sung to instrumental accompaniment." And then he gives references, including 1 Chron. 16:4-36 and Psa. 150. It is true that Eph. 5:19 teaches us to sing *psalms,* and it would be most hazardous to contend that psalms were sung *a capella.* This is one more reason why the music question must become "no issue" in terms of unity and fellowship, with each person and each congregation deciding for himself whether to be *organic* or *inorganic!*

Bering Drive Church of Christ in Houston is giving blood as part of its ministry. They have chosen the Institute of Hemotherapy as the depository for their gift to those who will have need. Now that may not be in the same class as installing indirect lighting, but it may be a way to let your light shine. *Giving one's blood.* For some vague reason it sort of sounds faintly Christian!

My revered professor at Harvard, Henry J. Cadbury, died recently at 91, precipitated by a fall down the staircase. The Friends Service Committee, of which he was one of the founders and honorary chairman until his death, sent me notice of his death, along with valuable memorabilia that I highly cherish. One item was an article of his on "What Makes a Good Quaker?" in which he says, "A conscientious Quaker cannot expect an easy time. He will find himself often in the minority, or even swimming against the stream." He himself was an example of that. As a young professor at Haverford during World War I, he was forced to resign for opposing the war and for saying that the Germans did not have any more hatred for Americans than Americans had toward them. But Harvard, *free* Harvard, took him in. In 1949 he went to Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for the Friends Service Committee. In those years he helped prepare the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament. In his retirement he lectured, where else but at Haverford (!), and in the intervening years that Quaker college also honored him with a doctorate. Dr. Cadbury well exemplified the ideal set by John Woolman, that pioneer Quaker he so admired: "To turn

all the treasures we possess into channels of universal love becomes the business of our lives." I was pleased to have had an exchange of letters with him shortly before his death.

Julian Bond, the black state representative of Georgia, spoke recently at Abilene Christian College. The Student's Association made the visit possible, and its president said, "We hope his presentation will help the community become more aware of the need for citizen involvement in local, state and national government."

The conservative Christian Churches now report some 528 missionaries in service overseas, plus 1,064 engaged in missionary activities in North America. They now have the National Missionary Convention to serve as a mouthpiece for all these workers, which meets annually. They are hopeful that this convention can serve all the diverse missionary efforts of the Restoration Movement.

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OFFICE NOTES

We remind you again of Carl Ketcherside's *Heaven Help Us*, a very helpful study of the Holy Spirit in paperback for only 2.95. Add a dollar to that and we'll include John Stott's *The Baptism Fullness of the Holy Spirit.*

A very handsome, hardbound copy of *The New International Version of the New Testament* is 5.95. If you want the entire Bible in the *New English Bible*, neatly done in hard cover, we can send you one for 7.95.

The College Press, Box 1132, Joplin, Mo. 64801, has prepared the titles of its Restoration Reprints that it will issue in 1975. If you sign up for all of them, receiving one a month, you get a discount. These include such goodies as all three volumes of Z. T. Sweeney's sermons, long unavailable. You can get details on what is offered and how you can sign up by writing directly to them. Carl Ketcherside is beginning his last year of publication with his January number. If you are not on his mailing list for *Mission Messenger,* you can receive this last (and probably best) year for only 1.00 by writing him at 139 Signal Hill Dr., St. Louis 63121 .

If you would like to read a Christian lawyer's view of the resurrection and miracles, we recommend *A Lawyer Among the Theologians.* A college student beset with doubts would profit, and it is only 2.95.

You will want to attend the St. Louis Forum, formerly the Hartford Forum, Dec. 30-31, at St. Louis Christian College, 1360 Grandview, Florissant, Mo. 63033. Carl Ketcherside and I will be on the program, but I don't know who else. If you will write to Charles Boatman, dean of the college, he will send you a program.

This issue is the last of the series on *The Church of Christ: Yesterday and Today.* This series, covering two years, will be bound in a single volume. This will be our *seventh* bound volume, five single volumes and two double volumes. So, you can have our bound volumes all the way back to 1966. You should place your order for the 1973-74 volume now, but you need send no money. We will bill you. Prices on previous volumes are 3.50 for the single volumes. 4.50 for the double volume.

The theme for the next two years will have to do with the maltreatment of certain scriptures by champions of partyism, with some such title as *The Word Abused.* We will be taking a hard look at some sacred cows that are continually milked for sectarian advantage. Our first in the series will be on "Come Out from Among Them and Be Separate," which you will find interesting. There will be many other features and articles along the way, which will be in the direction of analyzing the way men use the Bible to justify divisions and parties. One such extended treatment will be on *What Kind of a Book is the Bible?* which has to be decided before there can be much interpretation.

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READERS' EXCHANGE

You and Carl Ketcherside have so helped to restore in me and my family some hope for the cause of our peaceful Lord. Please continue your voice of reason, quiet, and peace in this noisy and confused time.—*Jerry Brown, 1818 Lipscomb St., Ft. Worth, Texas 76110.*

Without you and men such as brother Carl Ketcherside many ideas and horizons would still be lost to me.—*Mrs. David Scott,* 125 *N.E. 22nd Ave., Camas, WA 98607.*

It was to God's great glory, and to our great joy, that you printed our previous correspondence, for through several readers previously unknown to us, we were led to the Genesee Valley Church of Christ, a small but wonderfully devoted group of disciples, many of whom left or were asked to leave congregations in their pursuit of freedom in Jesus. Oh, what salvation they were to us in their beautiful manifestation of Jesus living in them!—*Mike Gehl, 350 Townhouse, Briarcrest Gardens, Hershey, PA 17033.*

I am very happy each time that I find your periodical in my post office box. Your articles have helped me to rethink some of the ideas I had concerning certain passages in God's word, especially those concerning His church. If you would like, I will write you about the unique forms of worship the African brethren use in their assemblies.—*Richard Chowning, Box 194, Sotik, Kenya, East Africa.*

We have started another congregation in our home. We have purchased two lots, which, the Lord willing, we will have paid for in two years.—*Dallas Burdette, 2428 Elsmeade Dr., Montgomery, AL 36111*

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